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DDI # 1259-77

28 MAR 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with NSC Staff on Improving Political Intelligence

On 18 March I met with David Aaron, Rick Inderfurth, Bill Hyland and Bob Rosenberg of the NSC Staff to determine what we could do to improve our political analysis and reporting. The principal recommendation that came out of the meeting was that we endeavor to inject more color and political perception into our pieces. In general, the criticism seems to be that we are not providing enough political insight into the situations we are discussing. The view of those present was that the President and his advisors are primarily political animals who have a fine sense of political relationships, strengths, weaknesses and the political forces driving the players involved. Our problem was less one of providing the final answer and more one of setting the stage so that there is a real understanding of the local political peculiarities so that policy decisions can be made. In doing this we should not hesitate to use unclassified as well as classified intelligence information in identifying what is driving the political action. It was pointed out that the personality studies that have been done came closer to providing the kinds of information sought than has much of our other reporting.

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Neither Aaron nor Hyland were much impressed by the NID and felt that the longer items while valuable for some customers were completely lost on the White House. They noted once again that rather than long discussions

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of all of the issues associated with the [] visit, more interest would be generated in a perceptive piece discussing the political pressures [] at home and how they might influence him in dealing with the US. There was some discussion of changes that might be made to improve current reporting with no real conclusions reached. Hyland was strongly in favor of a bulletin-like publication with a first page similar to the "In the daily" column followed by a short elaboration on each topic. It was also noted that lack of any CIA publication in the afternoon resulted in the daily being rather stale stuff. The regional briefs being put out by ORPA were given high marks primarily because they were more speculative and thoughtful and less tightly stylized than much of the canned material in the NID. Hyland thought the State Department was worth emulating. In all of these discussions about the nature of our reporting, it was repeatedly urged that a close relationship to issues of significance to the White House be maintained. In discussing the nature of our current reporting, it is clear that the information handling problem in the White House is one of serious proportions. All of the new players are still finding it difficult to cope with the tremendous amounts of paper they receive. How that will finally be done has yet to emerge. Aaron at one point suggested that we send a sharp, young analyst down to spend a day with them to see the kinds of information they encounter and how they handle it, suggesting that this may help us decide on what would be most effective in terms of our publications. He also agreed to look at some exemplars that we might put together and comment on them.

One interesting unrelated fact that emerged was that Brzezinski, contrary to the view of our Sovietologists, believes that Katushev, rather than being demoted in his recent move, is apt to become the new Premier. 25X1

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Sayre Stevens

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The Deputy Director
Central Intelligence Agency

Executive Registry

177-3918

Washington, D. C. 20505

3/29/77

DCI

An intriguing memo
from Sayre Stevens covering
a recent meeting with
NSC staffers on our
intelligence product and
how it might be improved.



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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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29 MAR 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: Executive Assistant to the DCI

Admiral Turner would like you to provide the following to him:

1. A brief rundown on the internal security situation in Malaysia with consideration as to whether this should be a non-time urgent item for the PDB or his briefings for the President.

3. A summary of our evaluation of Soviet military facilities in Somalia. What are the capabilities and facilities? How much Soviet military activity is there now?

Commander, U.S. Navy

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